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or part of one of the following cDNA sequences of figs. 3A-3F and 7A-7I: 37-130, 211-289, 488-530, 490-620 or 680-700.

5 12. A method for the in vitro detection of the presence of an antibody directed against a LAV virus in a human body fluid, which comprises: contacting said body fluid with an antigen obtained from said virus LAV_{MAL} of claim 1, said antigen consisting of a peptide or a fragment thereof whose amino acid sequence is
10 encoded by an open reading frame of a cDNA sequence of figs. 7A-7I, and then detecting the immunological reaction between said antigen and said antibody.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein said antigen detects said LAV_{MAL} virus of claim 1.

14. The method of claim 12 which comprises the steps of:

- a) depositing a predetermined amount of said antigen into a cup of a titration microplate;
b) introducing increasing dilutions of said body fluid
20 into said cup;
c) incubating said microplate;
d) washing the microplate with a buffer;
e) adding into said cup a labelled antibody directed against blood immunoglobulins; and then
25 f) determining whether an antigen-antibody-complex has formed in said cup which is indicative of the presence of a LAV antibody in said body fluid.

15. A diagnostic kit for the in vitro detection of antibodies against a LAV virus, which kit
30 comprises: an antigen consisting of a peptide of claim 7.

16. The kit of claim 15 wherein the antigen consists of a peptide of said LAV_{MAL} virus of claim 1, encoded by the open reading frame of a cDNA sequence of
35 said LAV_{MAL} virus.

17. An immunogenic composition comprising: an antigen of the LAV^{MAL} virus of claim 1 or an immunogenic peptide or fragment thereof encoded by RNA of said virus; and a physiologically acceptable carrier.

18. The immunogenic composition of claim 17 wherein said peptide is the gp110 envelope glycoprotein or a fragment thereof.

19. The immunogenic composition of claim 17 wherein the peptide comprises a protein or glycoprotein whose amino acid sequence is encoded by all or part of one of the following cDNA sequences of figs 3a-3F and 7A-7I:

OMP or gp110 proteins, including precursors:

1 to 530;

OMP or gp110 without precursor: 34-530; and

TMP or gp41: 531-877.

20. The composition of claim 19 wherein the protein or glycoprotein is encoded by all or part of one of the following cDNA sequences of Figs. 3A-3F and 7A-7I: 37-130, 211-289, 488-530, 490-620 or 680-700.

21. An antibody formed against a peptide of claim 7.

22. A cell transformed with a DNA recombinant of claim 3.

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